

THE  
CHARGE

OF

ISAAC,

Lord Bishop of *Worcester*;

TO THE

CLERGY of his Diocese,

AT HIS

PRIMARY-VISITATION,

HOLDEN AT

Several Places in the MONTH of JULY, 1745.

T. Maddox.

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TO THE  
CLERGY  
OF THE  
DIOCESE of *Worcester.*

**T**HE favourable Reception of the following Discourse at the several Stages of my late Visitation, and the unanimous Importunity, as well as private Sollicitation of many of my Brethren, that it might appear in a more publick Manner, had, I own, considerable Weight against the Reluctance of my own Mind to publish a Performance so very imperfect.

BUT after having thus deliberated for some Time, imputing much to the Candor and good Nature so remarkable in the several Parts of the Diocese where it is my Happiness to be placed; I was persuaded, that

*in the present Circumstances of Affairs, it no longer remained Matter of Choice, but of Duty, to declare aloud the united Sense of so considerable and worthy a Body of Men, as the Clergy of the Diocese of Worcester, upon both Parts of our excellent Constitution.*

*T H E impious Rebellion that has now, as a heavy Judgment for our manifold Offences, extended its cruel and destructive Operations to this Part of the united Kingdom, and by nearer Approaches meditates and threatens the total Subversion of this Protestant Church, rendered it highly expedient to publish to the World, as our cool and deliberate Sentiments, previous to any immediate Alarm, the well-grounded Conviction we are all under of the real Necessity of supporting, with our utmost Efforts, a gracious Protestant Prince; in order to support the Church of England, and preserve the valuable Liberties of our Country.*

*I T appeared, moreover, highly seasonable at this perilous Juncture, to recollect and revolve in our own Minds the solid Foundations, upon which this excellent reformed Church is unquestionably built. Never could such Reflections be more proper than at a Time, when our Protestant Fellow-Subjects are actually gone forth to Battle, and are now exposing their Lives in Defence of our holy Religion; and when we ourselves may be obliged to strive, in the same glorious Cause, even unto Blood.*



*'TIS the Divine Mercy alone, and not Popish Veracity or Popish Clemency, upon which our Dependance for Safety must be founded. God's undeserved Goodness we trust will soon deliver us from this fiery Trial: Otherwise, those cruel Mockings and Scourgings, those Bonds and Imprisonments, those various Tortures and sundry Kinds of Death endured by our pious Predecessors, the Blessed Reformers in the original Establishment, must unavoidably become our grievous Lot in the Defence and Preservation of this Protestant Church. I need not mention what to you is so well known; that by the whole Tenor of the Popish Doctrine and Practice, Assurances in Favour of Heresy tho' ever so solemnly confirmed, like Vows to commit Murder which Popery does not esteem a more heinous Crime, not only may, but must be violated; non obstante fide & juramento.*

*P O P E R Y is the same artful, treacherous, cruel, unrelenting Superstition; however fallible in other Points, is still infallibly inflexible in the Maxims of Persecution: And accordingly is now publickly exerting an eager and malicious Zeal, even with great Hazard to its Votaries, in order to compleat at once, by Violence and Bloodshed, our total Ruin; and load this Free, Protestant Kingdom with the Chains of double Bondage, an accursed Subjection to France and to Rome.*

*'TIS*

*'TIS the lasting Honour of the Bishops and Clergy of the Church of England, always to be treated as the distinguished Objects of Popish Rage. Even upon the present Occasion, their just Concern for pure and undefiled Religion has already, early as it is, procured them this Honour.*

*WHILE on the contrary, to animate the Zeal of those who might be cautious and less active in this wicked Cause, strong Encouragement, in Terms well understood, is given on the Popish Side.*

*IN the constant Language and Intention of a Papist, Heretics are never considered as constituting a Christian CHURCH: This Epithet is entirely appropriated to their own uncharitable Communion. The Church of England in their Mouth indisputably means the Popish Church settled in England by Papal Authority, and never abolished by that Authority, which to them is Supreme. In their Consideration, therefore, This and this only is the Church of England by Law established. For the rest; what Protestants call the Church is in Popish Estimation no other than a Company of Heretics, who like Heathens and Publicans, not being within the Pale of the Romish Church, are in a State of Damnation. This is well known and understood.*

**BUT**



*BUT* when seditious Libels, the just Objects of public Indignation, lately published under assumed Titles of high Authority, go still farther, make favourable Declarations and give Assurances for a Religion that is to be reinstated, the Matter is cleared up beyond all Dispute to every Papist; nor can any Protestant doubt what Religion (whether a Popish or a Protestant Church) can now be REINSTATED!---Reinstated by the Disturber of our Peace, the Invader of our Country, the professed Ally of France, who has never once denied or dissembled his own bigotted Attachment to Popery!

*AND* to make this Matter, if possible, still more evident, the Act of Parliament for uniting the two Kingdoms, however beneficial to both, is to be abolished in the most arbitrary Manner, because it contains an explicit, lasting and effectual Provision for the Establishment of the Protestant Religion; confirms and perpetuates the Laws made for that Purpose, regulates the Coronation of every succeeding Prince with this View, and appoints a suitable Oath to be then taken. This solemn and important Act of the Legislature of both Kingdoms is already in the most presumptuous Manner declared null and void; without the Concurrence even of any pretended Parliament! What an early and encouraging Specimen is this to the Popish Faction, that the firmest Securities provided by Law for the Preservation of this Protestant Church, are to be trampled upon and destroyed! And  
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*also that the Power not meerly of dispensing with, but of abrogating at Pleasure the most salutary Laws, is avowedly made the Maxims of the intended future Tyranny ; 'tis impossible to call it Government.*

*I shall add no more, not doubting the Continuance of your seasonable Care and Earnestness, by public and private Endeavours to excite in your People a zealous Concern for our holy Religion, and for the only human Means of transmitting that invaluable Blessing to our Posterity.*

*May that divine Providence, which has so often appeared our Safeguard and Protection, now again preserve us from the Malice of our implacable Enemies ; that the Reign of our Gracious Sovereign may be long and prosperous, and that this Protestant Church may under him and his Royal Progeny flourish thro' all succeeding Ages, continue the Bulwark of the Reformation, and a Praise in the whole Earth !*

I am, with much Regard,

Your affectionate Brother,

November,  
26, 1745.

ISAAC WORCESTER.



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O F

*I S A A C,*

Lord Bishop of *Worcester*;

A T H I S  
P R I M A R Y - V I S I T A T I O N .

*My Reverend Brethren,*

**W**HEN Divine Providence was pleased to call me to the important Duty of inspecting this Diocese, it was extremely natural to reflect upon the great Abilities, the high Character and well deserved Esteem of many who had gone before me; in particular, to recollect the distinguished Qualifications of the several eminent Prelates, who in continued late Successions, had usefully filled this Episcopal Chair.

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AND tho' Memory may carry some of us back to those illustrious Persons, whose uncommon Accomplishments, both natural and acquired ; whose great Compass of Learning, employed and improved with much Judgment and Penetration ; will transmit their venerable Names to late Posterity, with all that just Regard, which can follow true Piety, extensive Knowledge, and a steady Attachment to our whole excellent Constitution ; not meerly as Friends and Well-wishers, but as able and successful Advocates, when such Advocates were most wanted.— Yet the engaging Qualities of my immediate Predecessor, more recent in your Thoughts ; that Piety and Prudence ; that Christian Fortitude, which so happily for this Church and Nation, supported him in the dangerous Day of Trial, mixt with so much Sweetness and engaging Condescension, so much Humanity, Goodness and Generosity, must fix his amiable Character with deep Impressions upon your Mind ; and give a Sense of the Loss this Diocese has sustained, which cannot, in Gratitude ought not easily to be effaced.

THESE Considerations, tho' attended with great Disadvantages to a Successor so very unequal, afforded however the comfortable Prospect, which I am extremely well pleased to find confirmed upon Experience, of a well regulated Diocese and an exemplary Clergy. And how impracticable soever  
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it may be for me, fully to sustain a Character you have seen in late Instances so well supported; next to the Divine Assistance, I desire, my Reverend Brethren, most chearfully to rely upon your Friendly Candour, and Brotherly Help and Advice; and must add a Request, not thought inexpedient by an inspired Apostle in his own Case, but certainly requisite and necessary for all succeeding Governors of the Church, *Brethren pray for us, that the Word of God may in every Thing be glorified.*

FROM the earliest Ages of Christianity, the Inspection and Visitation of their several Dioceses, has been always esteemed one principal Branch of the Duty annexed to the Episcopal Office and Character: And before the general Commands of the New Testament, for the Government, Peace and Order of Christian Societies, were accommodated by settled Rules and Canons, to particular Exigencies, and suited to the various Circumstances of the Christian Church: Or before the Appointment of certain subordinate Officers in particular Districts, to inform and assist the Bishop; Episcopal Visitations, as Circumstances then required, were much more frequent than now by Custom obtains. Several of the antient Councils mention these frequent Visitations, as having subsisted very early in the Church. *Antiquæ consuetudinis ordo servetur; & annuis vicibus dioceses ab Episcopis visitentur;* is a Decree of one of these Councils: Our own provincial Constitutions

likewise take Notice of the same annual, or sometimes more frequent Assemblies.

It is indeed become less necessary, as it is also less troublesome, to subject the Clergy of the Church of *England* to these repeated Inspections and Inquiries by their Bishops ; or to call them to annual, or more frequent Synods, to adjust the Business of, or frame Regulations for a particular Diocese : When very excellent and useful Rules are universally prescribed by a higher and more general Authority ; when the antient Form of Episcopal Government, originally established in the Christian Church, is carefully preserved ; when the genuine Articles of the Christian Faith are professed, and Divine Worship is celebrated in the Use of an excellent Liturgy, that does true Honour to its judicious and pious Compilers, and contributes so greatly to the Assistance, the Comfort and Edification, of serious Christians ; when useful Rules and Canons are already framed and confirmed for the Polity and Government, of Things and Persons Ecclesiastical : The Frequency of such Assemblies as the present, is become less necessary ; and the Business of these solemn Interviews between Bishops and their Clergy more contracted, as the present Purport and Design is not to frame Rules or Canons ; or to pass Judgment, founded upon general Principles of Expedience, by an Application of general Maxims to undetermined Cases, but to inquire how far wise and useful Orders and Rules



Rules have been observed and practised, and to recommend and enforce the careful Observation of such Appointments. And very happily for us, the Difficulties, on some Occasions the melancholy Disputes that have arisen in adjusting Matters of Importance, before these Rules were fix'd and settled, are no Part of our Lot and Condition.

DUTY and Wisdom therefore, as well as the Interest of the Church of *England*, conspire to recommend not only a thorough Acquaintance with our well-framed Constitution, which must prove the Parent of Esteem; but also a strict Observance of its Rules for our Conduct, and for the decent and beneficial Administration of divine Offices wisely prescribed, and fully established by competent Authority; as the best Means to satisfy our own Minds, and place the Constitution itself in its just and beautiful Light.

AND for this Reason, the present Time cannot, in my Apprehension, be more usefully and properly employed, than in bringing to our Remembrance the Excellency of that religious Establishment, in which it is our Duty, and will be our Honour and Reward, to be faithful Ministers and Stewards. Such a general Survey, tho' perhaps very little new Matter can be now offered, not only appears proper, as a Foundation for more particular Directions, but will greatly conduce to engage that affectionate Reverence,

rence, that zealous Concern, and secure that careful Obedience which will be most effectual to preserve the goodly Fabric, and promote the great End of every religious Appointment, the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mankind.

THE just Measure and Rule of the Goodness of any Ecclesiastical Constitution, is an Adherence to the Precepts and Institutions of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles. In this View, my Reverend Brethren, there is great Reason for Thankfulness to divine Providence, and to congratulate the public Happiness, that so great Regard has been paid, in every essential and important Branch of our Establishment, to the sacred Injunctions of the Gospel.

THE Appearance and Transactions of this Day would in me be an high Usurpation upon my Brethren; and in you a blameable Countenance of such Invasion, if it were not certain that our great Lord and Master had appointed different Officers, to minister in his Church, with different Powers, from the Infancy of Christianity. *He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers.* And still with more express Superiority; *God hath set in the Church first Apostles; secondarily Prophets; thirdly Teachers.*

BESIDES the Mission of the seventy Disciples, by our blessed Saviour himself, under a Character inferior



inferior to the Apostles ; the Appointment of TIMOTHY and TITUS, to be Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Crete*, with Authority and Powers manifestly Episcopal, fix this Point upon a Foundation, too firm and solid, to be shaken by the sometimes promiscuous Use of the Words *Presbyter* and *Bishop* : Which Appellations, as well as some others, in the Beginning of Christianity, were so little ascertained, that we find the great Apostle St. Paul denominates himself a DEACON. *Whereof*, says he, speaking of the Gospel, *I was made a Deacon*, Διάκονος ; in our Translation a *Minister*, Ephes. iii. 7. But in his Epistle to TIMOTHY, *I besought*, says he, *thee to abide still at Ephesus, that thou mightest CHARGE some that THEY TEACH no other Doctrine.--Against an Elder receive not an Accusation, but before two or three Witnesses.* What manifest Superiority is this ! *Lay Hands suddenly on no Man : Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long Suffering and Doctrine.* The Things that thou hast heard of me, the same COMMIT THOU to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others. Charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about Words to no Profit, but to the subverting of the Hearers.

AND to Titus in like manner : *For this Cause, left I thee in Crete, that THOU shouldest set in Order the Things that are wanting, and ORDAIN Elders in every City, as I had appointed Thee. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all Authority.* Let no

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*man despise thee.* How clearly do these Passages evince that the Powers of Ordination, Censure and Rebuke ; that, real Authority superior to meer Presbyters, or Elders, was vested in these primitive Bishops ?

NOR was there any thing particular in the Case of *Ephesus*, and *Crete* ; for in like manner it fully appears from the Records of Christian Antiquity, that when the Apostles ceased to take the immediate Care and Oversight of other Churches, they appointed Bishops, and committed to them, the Inspection and Government of those Churches.

BESIDES the Catalogues of the Bishops of the several Sees, we find recorded in *Eusebius* ; *Tertulian*, who you know lived in the second Century, states this Matter of Fact beyond all Contradiction: Speaking of some Heresies that falsely claimed a prescription from the Apostles, *cæterum*, says he, *si quæ audent interserere se ætati apostolicæ, edant origines ecclesiarum suarum, evolvant ordinem Episcoporum suorum, ita per successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille episcopus, aliquem ex apostolis vel apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum apostolis perseveraverint, habuerit auctorem et antecessorem. Hoc enim modo ecclesiæ apostolicæ census suos deferunt sicut Smyrnæorum ecclesia habens Polycarpum ab Joanne conlocatum refert ; sicut Romanorum Clementem a Petro ordinatum edit.*—And then he adds these remarkable



remarkable Words. *Proinde utique et ceteræ [ecclesiæ] exhibent quos ab apostolis in episcopatum constitutos, apostolici seminis traduces habeant.* Among a Variety of other Proof, the Epistles of *Ignatius*, who lived in the first Century, might well be added. Vain Efforts have indeed been made to discredit these Epistles, but the learned Labours of a late eminent Prelate have effectually vindicated the genuine Authority of these valuable Remains of Christian Antiquity; and thereby evinced that the first Christian Churches were certainly governed by their respective Bishops.

So notorious is this Fact, that the most able Advocates for modern Parity, *Blondel* and *Salmasius* admit, that Episcopacy universally obtained in the middle of the second Century. Strange indeed, if it should only have begun then! Utterly inconceivable, that in those pure Times, purified by the Fire of Persecution, the whole Christian Church in so many different places, should at once have perverted a Form of Government, which they all knew to be instituted by Christ and his Apostles.

CHANGES and Alterations of much less Consequence, have not often been thus accomplished without any, the least Notice or Disturbance. Nor is it possible to suppose, that all the Presbyters thro' the whole Christian World, should at once quietly  
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and tamely deliver up Powers conferred upon them, a few Years before, by Divine Institution ; without Struggle or Opposition. No one faithful Friend within the Church to admonish her of this supposed Departure from the original Appointment ; nor any of those various Heretics who left her Communion, or depraved her Doctrine, to triumph in Reproaches upon such a notorious Deviation, had there been any Foundation for such Reproaches.

THE Numbers converted to Christianity very early in the Christian Æra, which is universally admitted when this Controversy is not in immediate View, were by much too considerable, in many places, to assemble together in one single Congregation : And yet in the largest and most populous Cities, where the Word of God so mightily grew and prevailed, do we ever find, at any one Time, more than one Bishop ; tho' in the Nature of Things, there must have been several different Assemblies of Christians ; especially when a State of Persecution admitted not of spacious public Buildings ?

In the 8th Canon of the Council of *Nice*, if we go back to that antient and numerous Assemblage of Christian Bishops, we find a remarkable Provision made for the Reception and Re-instatement of the Novatian Bishops as well as Clergy, upon their Repentance, and promising to act in a more charitable manner, and to observe the Decrees of the Catholic Church :



Church: But this Re-establishment in their Episcopal Office, was to be executed in such a Manner, and is strictly guarded with so many Cautions, that in no Event, there should be two Bishops in any one City; as is expressly declared in the Canon itself, *ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῇ πόλει δύο ἐπίσκοποι ᾤσιν.*

'TIS therefore a well founded Observation of the learned Bishop Beverige, in his Notes upon the Canons of this Council: *Ut ecclesia Christiana, ab ipsa origine, Episcopis suis gavisa est, sic et nibilo unquam magis sollicita fuit, quam ut eodem in loco eodemque tempore, unus solus Episcopus clero plebique præficeretur.* St. Cyprian, near Seventy Years before the Meeting of this Council, had in like manner declared it a settled Maxim in the Christian Church; *Episcopo semel facto, & collegarum ac plebis testimonio & judicio comprobato, alium constitui nullo modo posse.*

SEVERAL other Proofs might be farther urged, particularly the Power of Ordination, peculiarly vested in, and always exercised by the Bishops; which is admitted by antient Writers, who are no way partial to Episcopal Authority. And, what is of great moment to prove the Distinction of the Orders of Presbyter and Bishop, we always find a distinct Consecration to the Episcopal Office. Provision is accordingly made for this purpose, by the *first* of that very antient Collection of Canons, called Apo-

stolical; and by the fourth of the Council of *Nice*, for the Consecration of Bishops, agreeably to the constant Practice of the Christian Church, by a new and solemn Designation, with Prayer and Imposition of Hands, by the comprovincial Bishops, ordaining and appointing the Bishop elect, to a new and distinct Order and Office. So little were Presbyters and Bishops considered as the same in those primitive Times!

BUT enough has been already said, to vindicate that part of our Constitution, which is expressly declared, by several antient Laws, to be originally founded in Prelacy, particularly in the Statute of *Carlisle*, in the Reign of *Edward I.* And the Statute of Provisors in the Reign of *Edward III.* Enough, to give all the Satisfaction a Matter of Fact will admit, that we are plainly in this respect, of the Household of God, built upon the Foundation of the Apostles, Jesus Christ himself the great Bishop and Shepherd of our Souls, being the chief Corner Stone.

NEITHER can it be alledged, that the Exercise of Episcopal Power is extended beyond its due Bounds, when in Processes of a criminal Nature or in Cases where Property is concerned, every Sentence by the Bishop or his Officers is subject, according to very antient Practice, to a Review before the Metropolitan: And if that Determination proves unsatis-



unsatisfactory, the Wisdom of the Legislature has devolved the Cause to the Cognizance of the supreme Ordinary, the King himself, in a Judicature constituted with great Wisdom and Impartiality, a Court of Delegates.

AND here our Felicity is remarkably distinguished from many Kingdoms in Europe, by the Enjoyment of compleat and impartial Justice at Home; without that ignominious and expensive Subjection to the foreign Power of Papal Usurpation, under which our Forefathers, as appears by many Acts of Parliament long preceeding the Reformation, deeply groaned, because they greatly suffered: A Subjection, equally destitute of all Foundation in Reason or Religion, as it was injurious to the Honour and prejudicial to the Interest of this free, and independent Kingdom! This I need not mention, the learned *Dr. Barrow*, whose excellent Writings I am glad of every Occasion to recommend to my younger Brethren, has compleatly proved in his unanswerable Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy.

BUT after all; this regular and christian Form of Government in the Church, however good in itself and well adapted to the Frame of the Civil Constitution, would still be of less Service, if proper Care was not also taken, that the important Offices of Religion, the Worship of Almighty God, and  
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the Instruction of the People should be duly regarded and performed.

FOR this purpose the whole divine Scheme of Man's Redemption, by the meritorious Interposition of the Son of God, and all the interesting Doctrines of the Gospel, are exhibited as the Faith of the Church of *England*, to be published by her Ministers, for the Instruction of the Young and Ignorant, and the Confirmation of those, who are more advanced in Years and Knowledge.

TOGETHER with the Doctrines of Christianity, great Care is taken to inculcate and recommend, what must always be allowed of the utmost Importance, the sincere Practice of Piety and Virtue, in every Instance that regards our Creator, our Fellow-creatures, or Ourselves.

THE Beneficial Institutions of the Gospel, the holy Sacraments, the Badges of our Christian Profession, the Comfort of Individuals, and the Union of the collective Body of Christians, are likewise celebrated, as they always ought to be, with a pious Regard to the original Appointment. The sacred Memorial of our blessed Saviour's Death is solemnized in that compleat manner, which himself, our supreme Lawgiver, has expressly prescribed, without that daring and sacrilegious Defiance of his Authority, the withdrawing the Cup from the Christian People ;



People: And tho', with pious Gratitude, the Death of our blessed Redeemer is very properly commemorated in that submissive Posture, in which the previous Confession of Sins had justly placed offending Sinners; yet this Act of humble Devotion is by the Authority of the Rubric itself sufficiently cleared of any Design to worship, or even acknowledge any corporal Presence in the consecrated Elements.

BAPTISM is administred in its original Simplicity, with Water, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; attended with a significant Declaration of not being ashamed of the Cross of Christ, very antient in the Christian Church [*frontem crucis signaculo terimus*, says a very venerable Writer of the Second Century] and free from those vain and superstitious Ceremonies, with which this sacred Ordinance was encumber'd by that fruitful Parent of Superstition the Church of *Rome*.

THE Children of Christian Parents, that they may not appear in a less comfortable Situation, under the gracious Oeconomy of the Gospel, than they were placed by Circumcision under the more rigorous Dispensation of the *Jewish* Law; the Children of Christian Parents, with an additional Security by the Engagements of Sponsors for their Christian Education, are by Baptism admitted into the Christian Church, under the Direction of an inspired Apostle, *Repent and be baptized every one of you,*  
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*for the Promise is to you and to your Children, and to as many as are afar off; agreeably to the Practice of the Apostles themselves, who upon the Conversion of Parents received their Off-spring into the Church, and baptized the Household: Confirmed also by the unquestionable Usage of the Primitive Church (by no means defective in its Regard to Infants) as has been fully evinced, by particular Deductions of the several Centuries, in the learned and accurate History of Infant-Baptism: But above all, supported by that benign Declaration of our Lord and Master, which well justifies the Admission of those into the Church Militant, whom he is pleased to receive into the Church Triumphant; Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God.*

WHEN Children are advanced to Years of Discretion, and become acquainted with their Baptismal Obligations; as a seasonable Act of Piety, and a charitable Monition in that dangerous Stage of Life, farther Care is taken that they should be brought to a publick Recognition of their important Engagement at Baptism. And when in the Face of the Christian Church they solemnly bind their own Souls, they are earnestly recommended to the Divine Grace and Mercy, in a very suitable Prayer, attended according to the Apostle's own Description (*Heb. vi. 2.*) with the Solemnity of Imposition of Hands by the Bishop; very conformably to the Description of the Usage of the



the antient Church ; *Dehinc ( i. e. after Baptism )*  
*Manus imponitur per benedictionem, advocans & in-*  
*vitans spiritum sanctum.*

NOR can it be objected, that all these appointed Offices are meer stated Forms. Forms indeed they are, but Forms wisely compiled, and highly useful. No Superstition, no Enthusiasm, no Absurdities to be charged upon them, happily express'd in the known vulgar Language, with a Dignity that bespeaks the devout Attention of the greatest Genius and a Plainness obvious to the lowest Capacity.

IF Premeditation be allowed, and to approach the awful Majesty of Heaven without it seems great Presumption, the well weighed Sentiments, which are the Result of that Premeditation, may certainly be committed to Writing : And will these Sentiments be rendered less proper, or less useful, for being examined and improved by several pious and learned Men ?

AND when a wise and instructive Form of public Prayer is thus composed, expressive of the same Wants, imploring through the only Mediator the same necessary Pardon, Protection and Mercy ; and acknowledging the Goodness of our common Father in Heaven ; can it be judged either necessary or prudent to make continual Alterations, merely for the sake of Change ? Nor is it easy to

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conceive, why a Number of eminent and able Men, under the Sanction of public Authority, may not as justly, and sure as decently and with as little assuming, prepare a Form of public Worship; as to invest a single Person with that great and absolute Power of offering to Almighty God, in the Name and Behalf of the People, those Petitions, and those only, which he alone in his private Capacity is pleased to judge proper. In either Circumstance, the Prayer is, and must be, made for the Congregation; but in one Case it has a previous Approbation, and may be fixt deeper on the Mind, by previous Meditation.

THE Authority of our blessed Lord in prescribing a most excellent Form of Prayer; the appointed Form of Baptism, constantly observed in the Church; several antient Liturgies, to which indeed Additions may have been made in subsequent Ages; and very remarkably the sacred Hymns, mentioned in Antiquity by the Enemies as well as Friends of Christianity, evidently shew that a fixed and stated Method of public Worship, which had also been unquestionably exercised by God's ancient People the *Jews*, is agreeable to the original Constitution of the Christian Church, and warranted by the Practice of eminent and learned Men and holy Martyrs, in the purest Ages of Christianity, many of whom compiled Liturgies for public Use and Benefit, in their respective Dioceses; which seems to have been the most



most early Usage, before larger and more general Assemblies could be safely and conveniently held.

IN short (for I should detain you too long by enumerating every Particular) from the first kind and beneficial Office at the Entrance of Life, to the last friendly though mournful Solemnity at the Grave, great Care is taken to suit the public Service of the Church to the Wants, and to the Improvement of Christian People.

AND yet under all these Advantages, all these cogent Arguments from Reason, Scripture and Antiquity, such is the Christian Temper, such the amiable Candour and Condescension of the Church of *England*, that with the Reverend Fathers of the Church who have declared, *quod non religionis est cogere religionem quæ sponte suscipi debeat non vi*, she abhors all Methods of Violence and all the Influence of Persecution ; and with the other odious Absurdities of Popery, most cordially rejects that unchristian, cruel, persecuting Spirit, which spreads Misery and Devastation upon Earth, and calls down Fire from Heaven : In Meekness instructing those that oppose, she pities their Mistakes, and endeavours their Conviction, but desires not to destroy those Lives that *Christ Jesus* came to save, nor cruelly to awaken the Terrors of the secular Arm.

THIS brief Representation of the general Frame of the Church is sufficient, as I hinted before, to engage and continue our best Endeavours to preserve and recommend so well concerted, so wise and useful an Establishment of the Christian Religion; and thereby happily approve ourselves to God and our own Conscience.

To attain these valuable Ends, a due Observance of the Rules and Canons of the Church; an orderly and regular, a decent and serious Performance of all the Offices of Religion are highly requisite. It will always prove extremely difficult to engage a general Esteem, where those who are immediately concerned shew little or no Regard. As on the contrary, if a Man withdraw not his Shoulder from the Burthen, but upon every Occasion appears truly desirous to observe the Rules to which he is himself subject, he may with greater Ease and more Success prevail with others to yield a due Submission. And indeed very excellent Rules are prescribed for the just Performance of all the several Offices of Religion; and that no Clergyman might ever be unmindful of his sacred Character, these Rules are so minute as to direct upon all Occasions a strict Guard upon ourselves; and require something even in the Dress and Habit of a Clergyman to distinguish his holy Profession. And tho' the Letter of the ancient Canons (and very antient ones there are  
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to this Purpose) or even of the latest Canon upon this Subject cannot perhaps, with any tolerable Decency, be now exactly observed, yet the Spirit and Intention may and ought to be well pursued, by appearing constantly in such a Dress as declares our Profession; and thereby obtains the two great Ends of the Appointment of a distinguished Habit, viz. the *securing an Estimation due to the special Messengers and Ministers of Almighty God*, as it is expressed in the 74th Canon; and preserving always in our own Mind the Remembrance of our sacred Character.

But I proceed——— The public Service of the Church, where a Congregation can be collected, is constantly and regularly to be performed, always seriously, gravely and distinctly. The holy *Sacraments* are to be administered with the utmost Reverence and Devotion: And that they may be attended with due Regard and proper Influence, great Care is to be taken to prepare the Minds of the People for a due Attendance on these divine Institutions, by explaining the Nature, the Design and Benefits of them, and by representing the Qualifications requisite to a beneficial Participation. Previous Notice of the Administration of the Lord's Supper, I make no Question, is always regularly given.

THE *Word of God* is to be *preached* and explained to the People, with Diligence, with Plainness, with an affectionate Seriousness. Most useful  
and

expedient it certainly is, unless very particular Circumstances require the contrary, to avoid in the Pulpit a deep, controversial Method of explaining Points of Divinity. A real Improvement in Piety and Virtue will be much better effected by a serious and plain Discourse upon the great Articles of the Christian Faith, or the necessary Duties of the Christian Life, than by engaging the Attention of a common Audience to the Objections of Adversaries, or amusing their Minds with the Subtilties of Controversy. The Language and Authority of Scripture, seriously and properly applied, according to the Sense and not the Sound, will have great Weight in a Christian Audience; and practical preaching, obvious even to inferior Capacities, best promote, what a Christian Preacher should always have in View, a pious and holy Life.

BUT besides this more general Information by Preaching; the Church has wisely and carefully provided for a preparative Instruction by the seasonable and compassionate Work of *Catechising*. With how much Diligence and Care the Catechumens of Old were faithfully instructed, I need not mention in this Assembly; or that the Ecclesiastical and Statute Law, the Canons and Rubric of our own Church, have in the strictest Manner enjoined this important and useful Labour of Love, to remove the Ignorance, and form the Morals of young People.

LET



“ LET me intreat you, *says a most eminent Wri-*  
 “ *ter,* to look after catechising and instructing the  
 “ Youth of your Parish. He that would reform the  
 “ World to Purpose, must begin with the Youth,  
 “ and train them up in the Ways of Religion and  
 “ Virtue.”

“ THE main Care of the Education of Chil-  
 “ dren must lie upon Parents, but yet Ministers  
 “ ought not only to put them in Mind of their Du-  
 “ ty but to assist them all they can; and by pub-  
 “ lic catechising frequently to instruct both those  
 “ who have not learned and those who are ashamed  
 “ to learn any other Way. And you must use the  
 “ best Means you can to bring them into an Esteem  
 “ of it, which is by letting them see you do it, not  
 “ meerly because you are required to do it, but be-  
 “ cause it is a Thing so useful to them and to their  
 “ Children. There is a great Difference between  
 “ People’s being able to talk over a Set of Phrases  
 “ about Religious Matters, and understanding the  
 “ true Grounds, which are easiest learned and un-  
 “ derstood and remembred in the short catechetical  
 “ Way.”

’Tis sufficient barely to mention that these are the  
 Words of BISHOP STILLINGFLEET; no Encomi-  
 um need to be added to that great Name; nor o-  
 ther Authorities produced, which might be done in  
 great

great Number and Weight, to support his Sentiments.

It gives me true Satisfaction that this useful Duty, which the Church judging of high Importance has enjoined in the 59th Canon under the severe Penalties of Suspension and Excommunication, is in so many Places of this Diocese so regularly performed; nor after this public Notification, can I at all suppose that there will be any Neglect in any one Parish thus to explain the Principles and Duties of Religion in the most instructive Manner; or that the best Endeavours will not be universally employed with Parents and Masters to send their Children and Servants, as they are bound in Conscience and required by Law, to receive the Benefit of this necessary Instruction, so kindly provided for them.

AND as I fully rely, my Reverend Brethren, upon your faithful Diligence thus effectually to prepare young Persons for *Confirmation*; so shall I, by the Blessing of Almighty God, continue my best Endeavours that this antient and useful Office may be perform'd, at proper Times and Places, in the most regular, serious and beneficial Manner.

BUT besides the faithful Discharge of the public Offices of Religion, a Minister of a Parish may be greatly serviceable in his private Intercourse with the People committed to his Charge; *using*, as is most solemnly



solemnly promised at his Ordination, *both public and private Monitions and Exhortations, as well to the Sick, as to the Whole, within his Cure, as Need shall require, and Occasion shall be given.*

IN visiting the Sick a Clergyman may come too late, if he stays 'till the Advances of Death, which is too often the Case, importunately press for his immediate Attendance : When there is but little Room in a State of so much Concern and Confusion, to administer any real Service to a poor expiring Mortal, or fix any lasting Impressions upon the passionate Spectators of his approaching Exit. A friendly Visit, uninvited and prudently conducted, may afford Opportunities of doing greater Service both to the sick Person and those about him. And in Case of a Recovery, Gratitude for that Mercy should be strongly recommended, with the wholesome Advice of retaining a constant Remembrance of those just Sentiments of Piety and Virtue, which are too commonly more regarded in Seasons of Sicknefs and Distress than in the Time of Health and Prosperity.

IN many other Cases the private Labours of a Clergyman will be greatly useful ; which renders his careful RESIDENCE among his People more desirable and more necessary. His friendly Council and Assistance, upon many Emergencies, may be of great Comfort and Advantage to his Flock. He may not only recommend, but as Occasion requires explain

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proper and useful Books for the Improvement of his People, especially the younger Part of his Charge. And for this Purpose it will not perhaps be altogether superfluous to mention, that many serious and instructive small Tracts and Books, composed by eminent Divines of the Church of *England*, are charitably distributed by an excellent SOCIETY, in *London*, instituted for the promoting Christian Knowledge; from whom any Number of these practical, useful Tracts may be obtained at a very moderate Expence.

A Clergyman's private Labours may still be farther useful in convincing and reclaiming Sinners, who disregard or avoid the Means of public Instruction; and in the Christian and pleasant Work of composing unhappy Differences, *maintaining and setting forward*, to which he is expressly engaged, *as much as in him lieth, Quietness, Peace and Love among all Christian People*; in one Word, promoting the intended good Effects of public Administrations by prudent Advice and private Council; and by that persuasive Argument a regular Behaviour becoming a *wholesome Example and Pattern to the Flock of Christ*.

To be put in Remembrance of these Things cannot be improper for the oldest of us, though what has been offered upon the several Duties of a Clergyman is intended chiefly for my younger Brethren,



as what I am now going to add with Respect to an Improvement in useful Learning and Knowledge, peculiarly relates to them, who have so lately promised to be *studious in reading and learning the Scriptures*, which 'tis to be hoped will be carefully done in the Original. Diligent Application to an Improvement in sound Knowledge, begun in the early Stages of Life, will produce great Comfort and Satisfaction, as well as much Usefulness in the more advanced Periods; and if once the pleasant and instructive Business of spending some Hours every Day in pursuing such learned Inquiries, such Studies as are suited to a Christian Divine is by Custom made familiar, which I trust is the common Case, this Method of Life will soon grow into a settled Habit, attended with much Tranquillity and Comfort. A few of the best Books, at first especially, thoroughly studied and well digested, still resorting to the holy Scriptures in the Original, will give young Clergymen, for to such only I am now speaking, more substantial Knowledge in the Principles and Duties of the Christian Religion, than can be acquired by a hasty Passage over a much larger Field of Learning. Our own Church happily affords some excellent Productions for this Purpose, which are within the Reach of every Hand; to which I hope will be added the venerable Remains of the three first Centuries at least; and these to our Misfortune, by the Injury of Time and the Effects of several Persecutions, now lie in no great Compass.

THERE is another Point, which is of general Concern, that should be mentioned with an Earnestness, if possible, equal to the great Importance of it : This is not only to enjoin, but to entreat and beseech you with the utmost Importunity that the strictest Caution may upon all Occasions be faithfully used, in signing Testimonials. These solemn Approbations are by no Means Matter of Favour, or Matter of meer Form, but of Justice, strict Justice——Justice to yourselves, to your own Character and Reputation, and sacred Profession——Justice to your Bishop, who places a Trust and Confidence in your Fidelity and Integrity——Justice to the Church of God, which is entituled to your true and faithful Service. Where a Character is not well known, no solemn Attestation should be given to the Goodness of it, much less when the contrary is known, or too justly suspected. 'Tis not Charity; Charity is founded in Truth and Justice. Let no Importunity, no false Compassion, for false Compassion it certainly is, ever extort this Act of Falshood, in its Consequences most pernicious to true Religion. *Be not Partakers of other Mens Sins.*

THAT no Mistake might arise upon this Head, a settled Form has been dispersed for this Purpose, which I doubt not will be carefully observed; and timely Notice always given by those, who intend to offer themselves as Candidates for Holy Orders, pur-



suant to the Directions already transmitted to the several Incumbents; who will upon no Account, I presume, make any Nomination, or give any Title to a Curacy but what is real, of which it is my Duty to continue to make a strict Inquiry.

THE Reception of a Curate, without the Examination and Admission of the Bishop of the Diocese, is a flagrant Contradiction to the Law and to the Canons of the Church, attended with much Inconvenience and Mischief. Not only Persons, who though really in Orders have been justly repudiated in one Diocese, do in this irregular Way find improper Reception in another; but what is still more shocking, the most sacred Offices of Religion have, in fact, by this uncanonical Practice been daringly administered by such abandoned Persons, who are so far from being constituted in Holy Orders, that they have lived and acted in an impious Course of the most detestable Falshood and Imposition.

No wonder the Christian Church in all Ages, and the Church of *England* in particular, has exercised so much Caution upon this necessary Point, in which the Preservation of Order is so essentially concerned: So much Caution, that we find the following Constitution made in the Reign of *Edward II.* and confirmed, among others, by *25 Henry VIII.* *Nulla modo admittantur ignoti sacerdotes nisi prius constiterit de eorum Ordinatione, vitæ munditia pariter*

*riter & literatura.* And again, *Item præcipimus ne sacerdotes ignoti de quorum ordinatione non constat ad divinorum celebrationem deserviendo ecclesiis admittantur ; nisi de licentia Episcopi diocesani ; cum per literas testimoniales, vel testimonium bonorum virorum, de eorum vere constiterit ordinatione & sufficienter facta fuerit fides.*

So far from being allowed to administer divine Offices, that by another more antient Canon we find these unauthorized Wanderers, excluded from receiving the holy Sacrament, *Presbytero sive Diacono sine antistitis sui epistolis ambulanti communionem nullus impendat.* In a Case so plain and so important I will add no more.

BUT there is likewise an Act of Justice to your Successors, as well as to yourselves, that I mention with Concern upon observing by the Answers made to the Queries transmitted to you last Year, that the Rights of the Church have in several Instances been unhappily lost. Tho' this Topic may have the Appearance, 'tis an Appearance only of a meer temporal Concern : Nor is it to be regarded in that View, but considered as of a spiritual Nature, being the only Provision for the continued Performance of spiritual Offices ; and thereby becomes in a high Degree a Matter of Trust and Conscience. Every Incumbent, however his own transient Interest may be connected, is undoubtedly a Trustee.— A Trustee for the Public, to preserve



serve what is allotted by Law for a very useful public Service and Administration : A Trustee likewise for his Successors ; for to his present Care the Constitution has committed their future Subsistence and Support. A litigious, contentious Disposition should never be encouraged ; yet too great Readiness in giving up the Property of another is a Conduct by no means very commendable in a Trustee. You are constituted not only the temporary Possessors, but the Guardians of the Patrimony of the Church ; not the indolent, much less the voluntary Destroyers of what is yours only, under a Confidence in your Fidelity and Care. This Business will be executed more securely, if You transmit by faithful and accurate Terriers, proper to be renewed at convenient Distances of Time, an exact Account of the several Parts of your Trust, the Rights and Possessions of your respective Churches.

THE Particulars that have been already mentioned fall very much under your single Care ; other Matters there are where your Concurrence and Assistance may be of great Use and Benefit.

THE Practice of citing before the Ordinary a Number of substantial Inhabitants in every Parish, called *Testes Synodales*, has for many Years been intirely disused : And of course his Information, formerly more large and extensive, now, in a manner, wholly arises from the Church-Wardens. How defective

fective in many Cases this Information proves is but too notorious: The decent Support and Repair of Churches; the necessary Provisions for the regular Performance of divine Service; the Presentment of Offenders subject to Ecclesiastical Censures; the Justice to preserve and improve, the faithful Care to distribute every pious Donation or charitable Bequest; are Matters of Importance that well justify and require the Advice and Assistance of the Minister to Church-Wardens, not always sufficiently acquainted with, or inclined to the regular and compleat Discharge of the Duties of their Office; and make it necessary to put them frequently in Mind of the Obligation of the solemn Oath they have taken faithfully to discharge that Office. And in Cases where they are totally negligent, the Minister is by Law empowered to supply that Defect.

I shall trespass upon your Time no longer than by mentioning, what is indeed of manifold Importance, how necessary it is upon all Occasions to remember that we are Members and Ministers of a PROTESTANT Church; bound in Gratitude, as well as Duty, to pay and to inculcate a chearful Obedience to that gracious Protestant Prince, whose steady Affection to our well framed Establishment, whose watchful Care to defend and support it, upon many Occasions extreamly conspicuous, have well verified that early Declaration upon his Accession to the Throne “ That the Preservation of the  
“ Church



“ Church of *England* should be his first, and al-  
“ ways his chief Care.”

A Protestant Prince is truly necessary to the Subsistence of a Protestant Church : Enemies as well as Friends concur in this Opinion. Hence so many Dangers to their Persons, their Estates, their Lives, their Families ; hence such Expence of Blood and Treasure have been incurred on the Popish Side of the Question. And, is all this to support the Church of *England*, and preserve the Protestant Religion ! No. They, who are well skilled in the Maxims of this World's Policy, have other Views and other Motives ; they have full and explicit Assurances, which within our Memory could not be obtained for the Church of *England* in the most inviting Circumstances to grant it. They know full well the Consequences of their Success in that destructive Project of introducing a Popish Pretender. May a gracious God forgive the Sins of the Nation, and for ever avert this dreadful Judgment !

HAPPY were it for our poor suffering Protestant Brethren abroad, in very many Countries, if all this were but meer Surmise and Speculation : But alas ! by woeful Experience they sensibly feel, that Misery to a Protestant People and Destruction to the Protestant Interest is the sure, the constant, the unavoidable Effect of a Popish Prince. Had the contrary but once come to pass, it might at least have been

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thought possible ; but 'tis to be hoped the fatal Experiment will never be repeated in *England*, 'till one single Instance has happened in some other Protestant Country ; least of all repeated in a Case where there is strong Evidence of peculiar Bigotry, studiously inculcated from the very Dawn of Life. A Popish Guardian therefore to a Protestant Church would be just as wise and prudent ; and upon Experiment will always prove as safe and beneficial, as the Appointment of a devouring Wolf to guard and protect the innocent Flock.

WHENEVER Popery is to be introduced, the first Attacks will certainly be made upon the Church of *England*. Experience, fresh in the Memory of many now alive, fully evinces that the Church of *England* is considered, by Popish Rage and Superstition, as the Strength and Glory of the Reformation, and was therefore destin'd as an early Victim to the blind and unrelenting Zeal of Popery ; in Defiance of the greatest Obligations, the strongest Assurances, and the plainest Maxims of Policy and Interest.

THESE Things I barely mention ; it is unnecessary to dwell long upon them in this Audience, that you may continue, my Reverend Brethren, to remind your People of the substantial Happiness they enjoy in a Protestant Government, the only Security



rity under divine Providence of the Continuance of the Protestant Religion.

'Tis highly criminal in any Man, after his Soul is bound by an Oath, to violate that awful Obligation ; but it gives the most shocking Idea of a Christian Clergyman, after he has made the most solemn Appeal to the great Searcher of Hearts in Oaths the most plain and explicit that could be composed——after the daily, open Recognition of these important Engagements in the public Prayers of the Church——at the very Altar in the Celebration of the highest Ordinance of the Christian Religion—— If after all this—— If after having prayed that God would give a Prince Victory over all his Enemies, any Clergyman should be found among those Enemies, by open Encouragement or secret Connivance, by a culpable Neutrality or private Approbation ; as no Censure can be too heavy, no Punishment too severe for a Crime, equally indecent and disloyal, that saps the Foundations of all Religion and Truth, brings the highest Scandal upon the sacred Orders, and must in the Event destroy the Church of *England* : So be assured, my Reverend Brethren, be perfectly assured that it is the full Purpose and Determination of my Mind, never to entertain so black, so dreadful an Idea of any one Clergyman, without the most flagrant and convincing Proof, which I am persuaded it will never be my Grief and my Misfortune to receive.

NOR can this Article of desiring you to persevere in recommending, by Precept and Example, a dutiful and necessary Allegiance to a Protestant Prince be thought in the least foreign or unsuitable, especially in such a Juncture, to the present Solemnity. 'Tis obeying an Apostolical Injunction to the first Bishop of *Crete*: For among other important Matters which he and all succeeding Bishops are directed to give in Charge, we find one Particular was, *to put Men in Mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates.*

THE POWERS THAT BE, we are assured by the same Authority, *are ordained of God*; and for the Preservation of his true Religion have been providentially and mercifully preserved, have subsisted and been acknowledged by the People in every Capacity at Home, and by all the Powers abroad; long enough to satisfy any rational Mind, for now more than half a Century: Unless, instead of yielding Obedience to a Government thus universally recognized, under which every Subject enjoys full Protection, we are to be for ever puzzled and perplexed with vain Enquiries into the dark and distant Origin of Titles and Pretences; which, in no Kingdom in *Europe*, were less certain, or from the Time of the Roman Invasions, have met with more frequent Changes and Revolutions; or can, at present,



sent, with any Exactness be less clearly fix'd and ascertained.

To these strong Considerations of Gratitude, Interest and Duty, 'tis superfluous to add any Number of human Authorities. One only shall be mentioned, 'tis of the highest Nature, and will come with the greatest Weight, as from a true and bountiful Friend to the Church of *England*, that pious and excellent Princess Queen ANN, whose compassionate Regard was munificently manifested to the poorest and most distressed of its Sons. Nor can any Words be more just, or more expressive, than her Royal Declaration,— “ If ever the Designs of  
“ a Popish Pretender, bred up in the Principles of  
“ the most arbitrary Government, should take Place,  
“ all that is dear to you must be irrecoverably lost.” Proper at all Times to be carefully remembered ! But especially at this important Juncture, when our natural, constant and dangerous Enemy is attempting to enslave *Europe*, and perfect for ever the Ruin of this Protestant Church and Nation.

BUT in the last Place, and what is of the utmost Consequence to ourselves, and to the Church of God ; 'tis absolutely necessary to keep a strict Guard upon our own Conduct, and in every Respect exhibit to the World an instructive Example of the real Influence of good Principles.

'Tis

THIS a great Satisfaction, that upon the best Observation I can make, 'tis by no means necessary to detain you long upon this Subject, who well know that besides the common Obligations, great and powerful though common to all Christians, the very Profession of a Clergyman and his solemn Engagements at his Ordination to that Office, give additional Force to every Argument for the most exact Piety and Virtue.

THE more excellent our Constitution is, and the clearer Light and better Help is afforded; the more just and natural it is to expect a Behaviour suitable to these Advantages.

THE Directions of the Holy Scriptures to this Purpose, for I choose to confine myself to these, are, you know, very numerous and very strong: *That the Ministers of Christ should take Heed to themselves, and to their Doctrine, and to the Ministry, which they have received, that they may fulfil it. To be an Example to the Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity: To give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine, holding the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience, and adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things.*

THESE



THESE pious Endeavours will do Credit to our Holy Profession, support and recommend the Church in which we minister; and in the happy Event, through the Divine Assistance and Mercy in Christ Jesus, both save ourselves and those that hear us.

*F I N I S.*

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